

LIFE IS A GIG

THE STORY OF A DJ - BY RUSS ADCOCK

My memory doesn't serve me as well these days, but I think that I first got into DJing at the age of 19 in 1978. I took over from my brother-in-law to be, who was a mobile DJ for the Aquarius Disco and Lightshow, the creation of the late, great, Bill McLean who built most of the kit himself. That in itself was a worry (RIP Bill!). Although the lightshow was brilliant for it's time, I wonder, now we have PAT testing, if we would have ever

been granted a certificate! I'm certain the top hats with Xmas lights stuck on, plugged straight into the mains would have caused a few problems but, hey, we had some great times and avoided being electrocuted. The beauty of this game is that every gig creates a story, some better than others, and I thought that I'd share a few of mine with you here on the brilliant pages of Pro Mobile (early plug to get article included!)



18 Pro Mobile Life Is A Gig

The Aquarius speakers were a home made creation by Bill. If size and weight were the only measures of quality, they would have been straight out of the top drawer. However in comparison to my current miniscule HK audio equivalents, they were absolutely terrible! I remember setting up for a wedding one day and thinking 'this sounds like we are playing music through a bath of mushy peas!' However it was another good gig with no complaints!

Then there was my cousin Wendy's 18th. A little more pressure to do well because it was a family 'do', so it was perhaps predictable that a stylus packed up and we didn't have a spare! What happened? All hands to the pump. My blood brother (DJ Tantrum - not his real name but see later!) changed every record over on one deck and I did a voiceover between every song. Not something I would ever recommend and of course there was no mixing or even fading in and out. Still, yet again, the punters were happy. Adversity seems to lay down a challenge that we normally overcome and we have had a fair few challenges in our time!

There were many more memorable gigs but it's always tricky DJing your own 21st and engagement party (not the same night!). However Tantrum was there offering his assistance. I'm just glad he didn't stick his Gary Glitter album on!

One final memory from those early Aquarius days is a gig in a small Norfolk village where some of the punters kept leaning against the kit (still gets up my nose these days!). It was only come the end of the evening and packing up time that we noticed several bulbs missing from one of Bills chaser light contraptions! - I hope they burned their hands!

As is inevitable, life events eventually began to overtake my DJing. Throw in (and out!) a couple of wives, a move from Norfolk to near Brighton, followed by Eastbourne, three lovely children (Talisa 16, Tasmin 14 & Connor 8) and quite a bit of change in my

day job environment. All of this led to a break of some 18 years from the decks, at which point the stage was set for a remarkable comeback!

My return to DJing came about purely by coincidence. It was summer 1998 and we had moved to a new Close with the kids (well it would have been harsh to leave them behind and anyway the neighbours thought they were too noisy!). Not long after, a couple from number 13 invited us to a BBQ. We took the plunge and on the day walked into the back garden only to find a couple of guitars set up with a midi player and amp etc.

I have always been a fan of live music on the basis that the bottom line is these people are having a go at entertaining others (ring any bells?). So I said to my new 'mate' Tim what's happening? He told me that he would be playing a few songs for guests later on, which he did, although 'a few' was a big understatement. We stayed until the early hours when, respecting the close-knit neighbourhood, he then went 'unplugged'. The party continued singing along to classics from the Stones, Beatles, Van Morrison etc, and I loved it!

I guess without really knowing it, the embryo of 'The Boogie Brothers' was formed that night. Tim and I formed a friendship, had a few beers together, and spoke on many occasions in the weeks and months afterwards. He had become a bit disillusioned with live gigs and fancied doing karaoke instead. That didn't appeal to me, but I did feel the urge to return to mobile DJing. Tim won the debate on karaoke, so we put some more kit together and we were up and running for our first gig by February 1999. The rest is history as they say and we are still going strong today.

I created our website in May 2002 and enjoy updating it regularly. Please add to our site visits and send me some comments, it keeps me out of mischief!
www.theboogiebrothers.co.uk

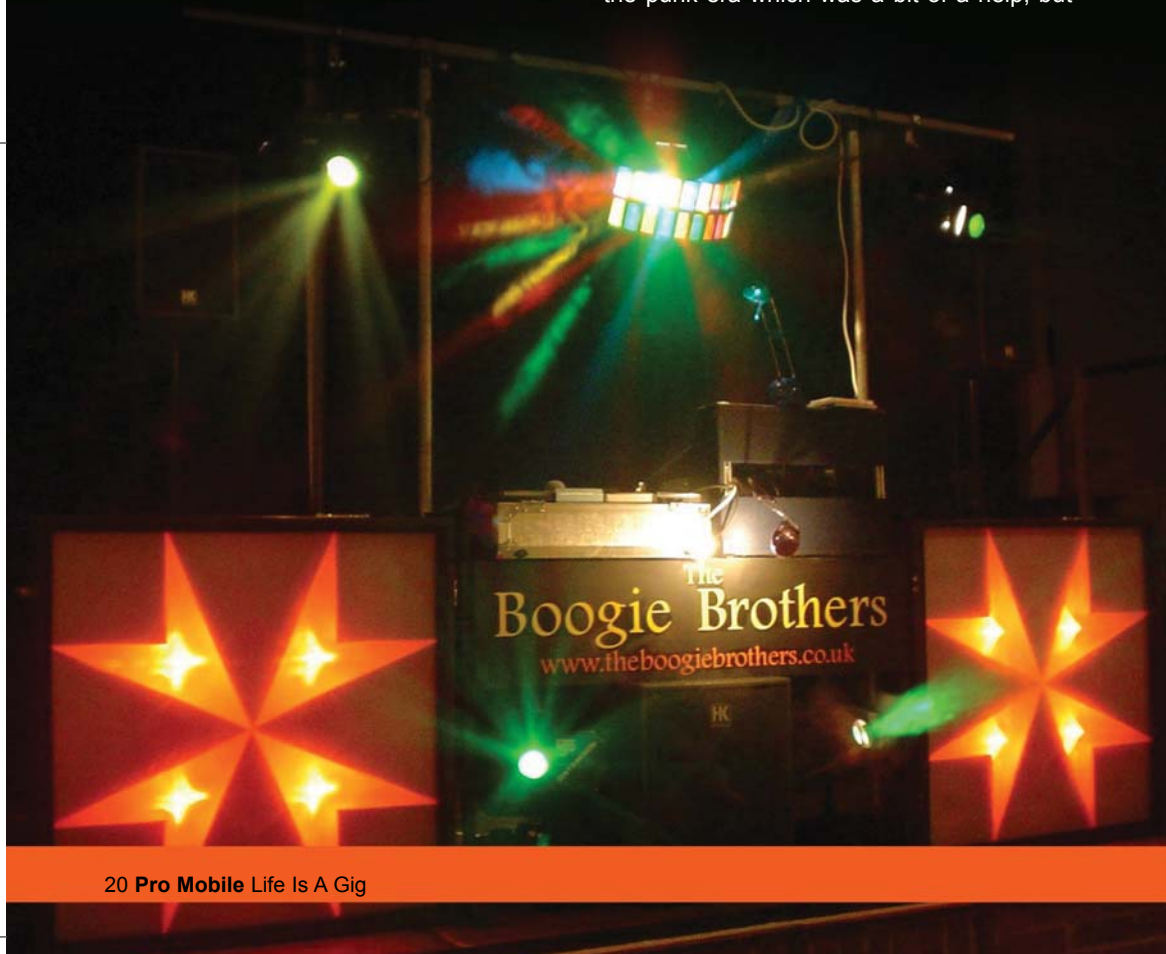
The Boogie Brothers has been a rich source of enjoyable gigs and stories. In the early days, before increased bookings and solo gigs (for three of us now), Tim and I took turns on the decks. I soon realised he was a neat freak when it came to packing the van and took great delight one night after a wedding gig in strategically dotting the gear all over a dark car park. Our friendship was certainly tested that night, although I am pretty sure the guests didn't hear his language! Key rule 1 - never swear in front of the punters!

One of my most rewarding gigs was actually a freebie for Mencap. From the stage of The Winter Gardens Theatre in Eastbourne it was a real joy to see 500 warm and friendly people walk straight from their buses, through reception, onto the dancefloor and

have no inhibitions about taking to the stage with us and dancing! Perhaps there is a lesson there for all of us!

At a gig for Yvette, a lovely partially deaf lady, most of the guests were also either partially or totally deaf, but able to pick up on the bass from the 600 Watt subwoofer. One of the few gigs where we were asked to 'turn it up!' Key rule 2 - too loud is not big or clever! (Ask the DJ we sacked!)

A bizarre gig that springs to mind was a Christening for the new born son of a couple of punk rockers. It was held well after the punk era and a challenge to say the least. It was one of those nights where you take a chance on a song from a punk compilation album and everyone loves it, even though you don't know it yourself! I grew up through the punk era which was a bit of a help, but



have you ever tried four hours of mostly punk songs? Needless to say YMCA and Blame It On The Boogie stayed in the box that night. It made a change!

There have been many weddings of course. We offer a 5 stage process to reassure our customers and this works well. Please feel free to steal it from the website. The cake is big enough for all of us! One classic line I picked up from a Best Man's speech is 'They say blood is thicker than water, Neil is thicker than both!'

At another wedding the Groom announced he had a surprise for everyone. He had invited one of his ex-girlfriends along! The Bride and the whole wedding party looked understandably shocked for a moment, before breaking into fits of laughter when an usher wheeled in a blow up doll in a wheelchair!

Key Rule 3 - try to dissuade karaoke at a wedding. It has never worked well for us. One Groom insisted on it, as well as singing

about eight songs himself. He visibly proceeded to hack off most of the guests until of course I pulled the night back on track! Also I kid you not, a Bride who shall remain nameless, wanted karaoke and insisted on doing the first song and chose 'I Will Survive'. On my life!

We did a superb BBQ in a farmers back garden (great food and probably a cow missing the next day - sorry veggies), 1700 Students at a Ball (high testosterone levels mainly from me), numerous birthdays of course, and Niall the American Footballers leaving do. I have never seen so much alcohol consumed but it was all under control and a good night.

Lisa's 40th is definitely worthy of a mention. She sent me five sides of A4 handwritten requests a week before, but was seriously under the influence by 8.30pm and forgot all about it! I worked out her requests added up to over 5 and a half hours of music and it was only an 8 'til 12 gig.

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Working with a Tom Jones look-alike and sound-alike at a Las Vegas night earlier this year was fun, not to mention a few great joint gigs with some really good pub bands as well. Just a quick plug here for 'Elliot's Sleeping' - old rockers (sorry guys) with a fantastic lead singer called Ella.

Oh and let's not forget the ex wife's birthday party in the very early days. Well I rather would, but it was a memorable night for the wrong reasons. She wasn't the ex then but my blood brother Ivan came down from Norwich and had spent a lot of time putting a set together. The ex and her mates started to complain more or less straight into his first number, Robbie's 'Let Me Entertain You'. The upshot was that he stormed off for the rest of the evening and didn't return until last knockings! So DJ Tantrum was christened and he still makes the odd rare appearance in the background at gigs! He prefers to be a roadie rather than front man; probably scarred for life now following that traumatic experience!

As we say at the end of gigs, that's just about all we've really got time for (boo - can you play one more mate please?). So what of the immediate future? I would like to step up to doing more Corporate Gigs and would welcome any ideas on how to break into that area. Longer term? Well I told my kids recently I might get a T Shirt emblazoned with 'DJ 'til I die on it'. They do actually tell their mates that I'm good, even if they tell me that I'm embarrassing. However - fellow DJ's I need some help here - I am 48 (and a half) now. How long can I carry on before I look too old and become a fashion victim?

I tend to shy away from children's and teenager's parties now, but we have the brilliant DJ Dunk (of club fame - up to three clubs now) who is 20 years of age and more in touch with the youth of today. In addition we already feed leads to and from another local disco i.e. pass the younger ones over in return for the 40th's and 50th's etc. Perhaps I should end this with a challenge?

Who is the oldest DJ out there and how long can you keep going? Are there any rules on this? My own view is, as with all walks of life, it's the psychology of age not the chronology - which probably means I am an old git still trying to get away with it! As I was writing this I just Googled 'oldest DJ' and found David McLeish an 85 year old DJ (albeit radio DJ) in Melbourne and the article is dated August 2004. I've got years left in me! (However I bet David doesn't hump gear into a Transit in the pouring rain at 1.30 am on a cold wet January morning!)

I hope this was mildly interesting to my peers and any contact from fellow DJs etc would be most welcomed on a post card (or via the website!). Any offers for my 50th party in November 2008? I hate the Birdie song, Las Ketchup and the Cheeky Girls. I'm happy to lead 'Amarillo', play air guitar to 'Summer of '69' and I promise not to ask 'Have you got anything we can dance to?' otherwise the floor is yours. I'll probably do a Lisa that night! (Out of it by 8.30pm I mean, not the long list of requests!)

Last but not least a word for my better half Emma. Thanks for your patience and support. I promise to always give you a kiss when I finally get home. When I am excited about a new light or piece of kit I have bought all I need is 'that's really good Russ' even if you don't mean it! Love you x

Keep on rocking!

List of kit currently used:

PA HK Audio LUCAS 1000
 Citronic 10:4 mixer
 Citronic Dual CD Player - CD2
 JVC 3 tray karaoke player
 1 Shure microphone plus 2 cheap ones for karaoke!
 1 Soundlab radio mic
 Ultimax Stand and T Bar
 2 x LFX Revolvers DMX'd
 2 x NJD Datamoons DMX'd
 1 x Soundlab Valero
 2 x DAP Audio Kaleidoscope Retro Screens
 1 x Source Smoke Machine - where permitted